

# Standing ovation at Cornelia Krafft's performance of "After 100 Springs"

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Those crowded together at Al Madina Theatre on the evening of February 8 turned to their neighbors and chit-chatted amongst themselves in anticipation of the night's performance. Just as the noise of the theatre grew to a crescendo and people shifted in their seats, the lights flickered, announcing the beginning of the performance.

The performance was Cornelia Krafft's "After 100 Springs," which premiered to a full house. Krafft, Assistant Professor of Fine Arts at AUB, reinterpreted Igor Stravinsky's "The Rite of Spring," first performed in pre-WWI Paris.

"After 100 Springs" kept the original Stravinsky music, though it was accompanied by lyrical movements from experimenting actors. The play was performed in collaboration with the Unite Lebanon Youths Project, a non-profit organization which aims to empower more than a thousand underprivileged youths living in Lebanon through educational and recreational programs.

The cast and crew consisted of an eclectic AUB student body. Krafft's engagement with such a diverse cast and crew, coupled with the freedom that comes with absurd theatre, allowed students involved to tap into their inner artist, whether on stage or backstage.

Hadi Aridi, Sociology graduate and pivotal character in the play, explained, "I've done a performance before with Cornelia, and it was an amazing life-changing experience." Aridi spoke about the liberating experience of performance art, saying, "It's not the kind of art that limits your movements. You can show whatever you want in your own way."

On the other hand, stage and light designer Ismail Hteit commemorated the mixture of people he got to work with, explaining that "this performance gave us a chance to engage directly with people from different backgrounds."

Because of its liberating performance, both Aridi and Hteit had different personal interpretations for the play. "It's basically about the older generation [not accepting] the new generation's new social values and norms," explained Aridi. "[Through the play], we're saying that we come from a society that tries to preserve its traditions, and trying to be very strict with these traditions."

According to him, this represents the circle of life not only in the case of the Middle East, but to all societies that try to preserve their history and heritage.

The light and stage designer, on the other hand, saw the play as an "interaction between the generations." Hteit elaborated that "this tribal society reached a point where actions must be [taken], and although it meant for the new generation to sacrifice a piece of themselves, it is only at that moment the society as a whole understood what it means to sacrifice a human being."

On that note, the play sheds light into the Arab uprisings as well as the Lebanese society and performs in the hope of "[making] the sun return." According to Hteit, "After 100 Springs" sees beyond the turmoil of the revolutions and asks the important question: "How many more sacrifices do we need for us to take actions?"

"The answer lies in all of us, yet we tend to ignore the fact that by 'sacrificing a piece of ourselves,' we can reach this unity that was achieved on stage."

The abstract aspect of the play gave way to various other interpretations from the audience.

It is perhaps the freedom offered to the audience to interpret its meaning in such a personal way that garnered such a positive response: a standing ovation from family and friends, theatre connoisseurs and performance artists, all praising Krafft's tangible vision.

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